

**What Is Claimed Is:**

1           1.       A method to facilitate automated software installation on a remote  
2 computer over the Internet, comprising:

3           initializing the remote computer with a custom operating system, wherein  
4 the custom operating system allows access to the remote computer over the  
5 Internet;

6           providing an archive locator to the remote computer, wherein the archive  
7 locator is one of, a uniform resource locator (URL) and a proprietary resource  
8 locator;

9           requesting an archive from a site specified by the archive locator, wherein  
10 the archive includes an operating system and desired software packages pre-  
11 configured for the remote computer;

12          downloading the archive to the remote computer from the site specified by  
13 the archive locator; and

14          re-initializing the remote computer with the operating system and software  
15 packages in the archive.

1           2.       The method of claim 1, further comprising loading the custom  
2 operating system into the remote computer during installation of the remote  
3 computer.

1           3.       The method of claim 1, further comprising initializing the remote  
2 computer automatically with the custom operating system when power is applied  
3 to the remote computer.

1           4.       The method of claim 1, further comprising:

2 creating the archive;  
3 storing the archive at a site on the Internet accessible using the archive  
4 locator; and  
5 upon receiving an authorized request for the archive from the remote  
6 computer, downloading the archive to the remote computer.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein creating the archive involves:  
2 specifying the operating system and software packages to be included;  
3 installing the operating system and software packages on a configuration  
4 computer compatible with the remote computer;  
5 testing the operating system and software packages on the configuration  
6 computer;  
7 creating a snapshot of the operating system and software packages;  
8 including a configuration file within the snapshot; and  
9 saving the snapshot at the site specified by the archive locator for  
10 download by the remote computer, wherein the snapshot including the  
11 configuration file is the archive.

1 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the configuration file includes data  
2 for configuring the operating system, network parameters, and software packages.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein providing the archive locator  
2 includes providing the archive locator over the Internet.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein providing the archive locator  
2 includes providing the archive locator in a command line parameter during  
3 initialization of the remote computer.

1           9.     A computer-readable storage medium storing instructions that  
2     when executed by a computer cause the computer to perform a method to  
3     facilitate automated software installation on a remote computer over the Internet,  
4     the method comprising:  
5             initializing the remote computer with a custom operating system, wherein  
6     the custom operating system allows access to the remote computer over the  
7     Internet;  
8             providing an archive locator to the remote computer, wherein the archive  
9     locator is one of, a uniform resource locator (URL) and a proprietary resource  
10    locator;  
11            requesting an archive from a site specified by the archive locator, wherein  
12    the archive includes an operating system and desired software packages pre-  
13    configured for the remote computer;  
14            downloading the archive to the remote computer from the site specified by  
15    the archive locator; and  
16            re-initializing the remote computer with the operating system and software  
17    packages in the archive.

1           10.    The computer-readable storage medium of claim 9, the method  
2    further comprising loading the custom operating system into the remote computer  
3    during installation of the remote computer.

1           11.    The computer-readable storage medium of claim 9, the method  
2    further comprising initializing the remote computer automatically with the custom  
3    operating system when power is applied to the remote computer.

1           12.    The computer-readable storage medium of claim 9, the method  
2 further comprising:  
3           creating the archive;  
4           storing the archive at a site on the Internet accessible using the archive  
5 locator; and  
6           upon receiving an authorized request for the archive from the remote  
7 computer, downloading the archive to the remote computer.

1           13.    The computer-readable storage medium of claim 12, wherein  
2 creating the archive involves:  
3           specifying the operating system and software packages to be included;  
4           installing the operating system and software packages on a configuration  
5 computer compatible with the remote computer;  
6           testing the operating system and software packages on the configuration  
7 computer;  
8           creating a snapshot of the operating system and software packages;  
9           including a configuration file within the snapshot; and  
10          saving the snapshot at the site specified by the archive locator for  
11 download by the remote computer, wherein the snapshot including the  
12 configuration file is the archive.

1           14.    The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the  
2 configuration file includes data for configuring the operating system, network  
3 parameters, and software packages.

1           15.     The computer-readable storage medium of claim 9, wherein  
2     providing the archive locator includes providing the archive locator over the  
3     Internet.

1           16.     The computer-readable storage medium of claim 9, wherein  
2     providing the archive locator includes providing the archive locator in a command  
3     line parameter during initialization of the remote computer.

1           17.     An apparatus that facilitates automated software installation on a  
2     remote computer over the Internet, comprising:  
3             an initializing mechanism that is configured to initialize the remote  
4     computer with a custom operating system, wherein the custom operating system  
5     allows access to the remote computer over the Internet;  
6             a providing mechanism that is configured to provide an archive locator to  
7     the remote computer, wherein the archive locator is one of a uniform resource  
8     locator (URL) and a proprietary resource locator;  
9             a requesting mechanism that is configured to request an archive from a site  
10    specified by the archive locator, wherein the archive includes an operating system  
11    and desired software packages pre-configured for the remote computer;  
12             a downloading mechanism that is configured to download the archive to  
13    the remote computer from the site specified by the archive locator; and  
14             a re-initializing mechanism that is configured to re-initialize the remote  
15    computer with the operating system and software packages in the archive.

1           18.     The apparatus of claim 17, further comprising a loading  
2     mechanism that is configured to load the custom operating system into the remote  
3     computer during installation of the remote computer.



1           22.     The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the configuration file includes  
2     data for configuring the operating system, network parameters, and software  
3     packages.

1           23.     The apparatus of claim 17, wherein providing the archive locator  
2     includes providing the archive locator over the Internet.

1           24.     The apparatus of claim 17, wherein providing the archive locator  
2     includes providing the archive locator in a command line parameter during  
3     initialization of the remote computer.